

## blithe smile, lithe limb by melliesgrant

**Series:** [the rose and the pearls](#) [2]

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M, Soulmate AU, and it took me so long to write it, angst with fluffy ending, cuz i dont ship mileven hardcore, not very good

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler, Will Byers, rest are mentioned

**Relationships:** Eleven/Mike Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2018-01-13

**Updated:** 2018-01-13

**Packaged:** 2022-04-03 15:21:47

**Rating:** General Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 2,683

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

mike is falling for eleven, which is a problem considering the name on his wrist is jane ives, not the number 11

## blithe smile, lithe limb

it's not that mike wanted anyone else in his life other than the soulmate printed on his wrist, but it's still a fucking murder to his ego when not a single girl in all of hawkins, indiana, won't even give him the time of day.

that's probably why when he met eleven, knowing that her name was eleven and *not* jane ives, he still inevitably fell for her.

drenched in rain, no hair, barely knowing how to form a coherent sentence she wasn't the type of girl one would fall for, and yet mike did.

she was there, a girl that spoke to him, staying just a couple of stairs down from where he was, flooding his mind with her sweet smile and powers he only wished were real in his wildest fantasies.

she was the sense of adventure he had longed for in his life, and an anchor that kept him above the water desperate to drown him as his best friend was missing.

and it seemed there was some unspoken connection between them, a spark from the moment they met, something mike couldn't describe (he had never been poetic, he was a science nerd after all), but he was hooked.

but he knows she isn't his soulmate, some girl named jane ives is, and he may hate himself for saying this later in life but he really wishes she wasn't, because eleven is in his head and in his heart and there is no escaping his quickly increasing feelings for her.

and he knows it can't go anywhere, because if it does it will end with inevitable heartbreak because she isn't his soulmate, something that lucas likes to make clear any chance he gets.

and mike doesn't know why it pisses him off so much, because lucas is right, she isn't his soulmate, but by god he is willing to ruin their friendship over it because lucas needs to just stop reminding him all the time.

and it's something eleven asks about when lucas doesn't come to one of their 'find will' meetings.

"we got in a fight." mike quickly spurts out, coming out harsher than he intended. "just a fight over the way the party was going, and he decided not to come."

"is it because of me?" eleven asked, looking up at him from her spot on the couch, her voice soft and faint and eyes looking up at him with hurt and confusion.

“no, no. something i did, it doesn’t have to do with you.” mike lies, because he doesn’t want to hurt her, that’s the last thing he wants to do to her.

he sees dustin looking at him from the side of him, a knowing look saying ‘why did you lie’, and mike gives him a look back telling him to ‘shut up before she realizes’.

he knows he should take his friends advice and forget this crush, tell her the truth, think only of the future mrs. jane wheeler but he can’t help but sneak down to his basement at night and show eleven his trophies and tell her new words and what school is like and nancy’s new boyfriend and why will is his best friend in the entire world.

he also likes to hear *her*, the few words that come out of her mouth, her horror stories that were her life, holding her close and telling her he’ll never let her live a life like that again.

“promise?” she asks, her eyes naive and ignorant to how often promises are broken, and filled with tears.

“promise.” he responds, and god he hopes he can keep it, because if he doesn’t not only will he be disappointing her but he will be disappointing himself too.

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he stares too much, he’s starting to realize it when lucas and dustin *constantly* call him out on it, and even one time when el asks why he keeps staring.

he’s glad she doesn’t understand why, but she knows something is up as he stumbles for a reason to give, the one he falls with incoherent and making no sense whatsoever.

he stares when she uses her powers and he stares when she gives a rare laugh at something he said, and he stares when she plays with rory and he stares when she gets a makeover and he can see a semblance of a regular life where she’s a regular girl (named jane ives because he is so damn delusional and hopeful for something that can’t be).

mike knows he should stop, he doesn’t want to be one of those starey guys he hears nancy and barb talk about, always synonymous with “creep”, but he can’t help it.

he’s so young but he swears he’s in love, because what else is this feeling in his heart and his gut and in his veins.

he doesn’t feel this way about his family, or his friends, and he knows he should be giving all his attention to finding will but how can he when she’s here?

she's all intrigue and mystery and the excitement he wanted in his life wrapped up in everything that makes him fall for her.

he's fucked, because the only time he's been able to save a princess is in dungeons and dragons, and he isn't sure if he's ready to do that in real life.

he's starting to think he has to if he wants to keep her in his life, because with all the good she brings there will always be consequences.

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everything goes to hell and she's out of his life before he can blink, pressed against the wall of a classroom he once had so much joy in and now felt nauseous even looking at the door. her goodbye was not enough, it did not satiate the beating heart in his chest nor the tears that fell from his eyes as he thought of her.

he lost her and got will back, at least that was something. at least he had his best friend, dutiful and loyal and always by his side, to cheer him up. a distraction, another person to pour himself into as he dreamed of her.

dreamed of the girl that wasn't his soulmate.

he doesn't tell will about this, though will knows he's in love with eleven. he can't bring himself to say it, say he loves someone that isn't his soulmate, he feels as if it's a betrayal to his future love and yet he can't stop it.

even now when she's gone, he can't stop the way he feels.

everyone tells him to try and forget about it, out of sight out of mind, but he can't. he keeps it a secret, he calls on the walkie talkie, trying to find her in any way possible.

he even starts to put a band aid over his soulmates name on his wrist, not wanting to look at jane ives while loving another girl.

he feels like a fucking asshole, one of those dicks who for some god awful reason cheats on their *soulmates*.

he hasn't met her yet, that's his defense now, but how can he stop loving eleven when he does meet this girl?

how can he stop when it's been almost a year and his brain pounds with her name and his veins bleed for her love and his heart beats for her soul.

how can he stop any of this?

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the world is hell, in every way possible, because now el's gone and he's watching will suffer and everything is out of his control. he's looking at his hands and looking at everything he loves unravel around him and he can't even seem to grip one last thing to keep safe and to himself.

he wishes she was here, find some way to help save will and save the day and make hot chocolate and catch up on lost times and pretend everything will be great from there on out.

pretend her names jane ives and he's whatever's on her wrist and that the monsters were all a case of folie a deux.

isn't it funny, when you put something out in the universe it happens?

in she walks, just as he wishes for her to be in his arms, and she doesn't look like herself and she's wearing funny clothes but she's grown more beautiful and he's grown more in love and they're both crying as they hug and release a sigh that says "it's you, it's me, i'm home."

he's never been happier, but his happiness takes a break when the truth comes out.

she's been here, all along, miles away and so close to home.

she's been here and she's known he's been calling, but they've been stopped.

and he's in another room with hopper and he's kicking and screaming and blaming him for all his sorrow, and he hates him but he understands why he did it.

and he's thankful overall, thankful he kept her safe, thankful he took her in.

and as soon as he gets her shes gone again, risking her life for them all once more, and as he watches her get in that care and drive away he realizes something.

he doesn't care if she's not his soulmate, not right now at least, because if she comes back alive he's going to love her as long as he can.

this time nothing will stop them, not if he can help it.

and when the sun comes up he has never been more thankful, that in one hand he has will and the other he has el, both safe and tangible and he finally feels worthy of the party and the people around him.

he finally thinks he has a chance at true happiness.

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“when are we gonna see el again?” will questions one day, weeks after the events, and she’s locked up in the cabin once more but he understands and he’s more accepting of it now.

he doesn’t begrudge hopper anymore, and while he wishes he could see her more he understands her safety comes first and until the rumors of the past two years die down she can’t enter society.

on top of that, she can’t enter society until she learns *how* to be apart of it, basic phrases and common knowledge, the things one doesn’t learn inside a laboratory. hopper and joyce are trying to teach her things to catch up on potential schoolwork, using will’s old books and mike willingly giving his notes hoping she’ll join them in high school the next year.

it’s the one thing making him hopeful of high school, the idea of her following the party there.

hell, he’s even gotten used to max now, and while he’s too prideful to admit it at this point he knows she’s apart of the party. she’s the zoomer, whatever the hell that is.

and he thought he fully understood the situation, that he would have to wait to see her again, but it seems the world has a surprise for him (if the world is hopper).

there she walks in, as he sits and broods over the misery of his life, and she comes in just at the right time (she always does).

she’s gorgeous, growing more beautiful every time he sees her, and this time she still has her hair slicked back but she’s wearing less eyeliner and her dress is a bright color and he prefers her like this, bright and bubbly and he feels like things are better in this new and brighter world, rather than one of darkness.

he runs to her, and no one else is looking and he’s glad, this moment is just for them and he isn’t sure if he’ll even tell will the full extent of it. the way she looks, the way she’s looking at him, he wants to hold this to himself for himself. he wants to hold his first love to himself, before his true love comes, and while he trusts his friends they can’t know.

they can’t know, not because he’s ashamed, but for the opposite. he is so in love and obsessed and crazy about her, and he can’t share that when he knows it shouldn’t be.

maybe he’d try to stop it eventually, but not tonight.

tonight he would hold her close to him as he danced his first dance, told her she's beautiful, everything to make it a dream night for two kids pretending their lives were as simple as a school dance.

and it's when they dance when it happens.

"you look beautiful, el." his smile is wide, a first in a while, the past year being one free of smiles but with her in his life suddenly he can again.

she looks down, covering her blushing cheeks, and all he can do is smile. she's so cute, so lovely.

"you shouldn't call me el anymore, it's jane now. that's what hopper says." she corrects, voice beginning to be less soft and more assertive, something she had been learning to do.

just hearing *jane* made his heart race, thinking of the ives on his wrist following that name. it's a popular name, he knows he'll meet plenty of people with that name, but it still eats his heart out and fills his veins with guilt. he's starting to hate it, the name jane, it's a name that symbolizes the end of his first love. he hates it, he hates jane.

"why, jane?" he questioned quickly, curious and hoping to change it somehow.

"that's my real name, what my birth mother wanted to name me. i have his last name now though, not hers." she swayed along with him, beginning to dance as the conversation continued, whispering in hushed tones so as no one else could hear.

"jane hopper? did he adopt you?" more questions, almost as many as she had about her own past. "what was your mothers last name?"

"ives." she responds, and that's the moment he knew his life would change for good.

that's the moment where nothing would ever be the same.

that's the moment it all made sense.

and all he can do is smile, because standing in front of him is jane ives, and guilt and heartache and hatred no longer fills his heart, but excitement and reassurance and a thousand other emotions he's only heard of in cheesy love songs.

and he can't even answer, he can't even say anything, he's just so fucking happy and all he can do is kiss her.

he kisses her like he's kissing his soulmate, because he *is*, and he's kissing her like he doesn't have to let her go and now he has a reason not to.

she kisses back, confused and oblivious as to what's going on, and content just being in his arms.

"it's you. i knew it, deep down, but now i know for sure. it's you, it's always been you, it's always going to be you." mike rests his forehead against hers, eyes closed, euphoria filling him and he's lightheaded he's so happy.

"mike, what do you mean?" she loves it, she never wants this moment to end, but she needs to know what he means.

he pulls away to look at her, holding one hand and rubbing it with his thumb, soothing and sweet, and rolling up his sleeve.

on his wrist, what he once hated and covered up but now coveted, *jane ives*.

she smiles as she looks, feeling his name burn on her arm, and she kisses her birth name on his wrist.

"it's me." it's all she thinks to say, as she shows her wrist with *mike wheeler* written on it.

he does the same, kisses her wrist, and looking at her with a look that fills her body with a warmth that only true love can be.

"it's me." he's smiling at her, and they both know now everything will be okay.

everything will be okay even if it's not, because they have each other.

and now, mike *loves* the name jane.